

**DETERIORATION OF PUBLIC  
ADMINISTRATION  
IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA -  
VIEWS OF EMINENT PUBLIC SERVANTS**

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## INTRODUCTION

This paper presents the personal views of eminent former or long-standing Papua New Guinean senior public servants on the deterioration of public administration in Papua New Guinea (PNG). Whilst there is a wealth of reports on this topic produced by academics or consultants, there is limited information documented on the views of Papua New Guinea's own experts in this area. Yet it is now well recognised that, without a high degree of sustained local commitment and ownership, most externally-driven initiatives to reform public administration in PNG have limited impact. This paper is an initial step in helping Australia develop a deeper understanding of what Papua New Guineans themselves consider to be the key issues influencing public sector performance and the priority areas needing reform.

In-depth, one-on-one interviews were held with a number of eminent former or long-standing PNG senior public servants during March 2004, which allowed for free-ranging discussion of issues they themselves believed to be of most importance. Interview questions were deliberately broad, focused on obtaining their views on the *quality* of public administration in PNG through the years since independence, the *degree* of deterioration and *prospects* for redressing current problems, main *causes* of deterioration of public administration, key *decisions* or *actions* needed to restore effective public administration, and the role of *donors* (either in contributing to the problems or assisting with solutions). This report attempts to synthesise the views and ideas of those interviewed, without interpretive comment.

## THE GOOD YEARS – WHAT MADE THEM SO?

There was consensus amongst all those interviewed that public administration in PNG was excellent until the early 1980s.

***Everyone shared a common agenda.*** People were energised, prepared, and completely focused on doing what was right for the country. There was a strong nationalistic drive in PNG to be independent of colonial powers and to run its own affairs as a country.

***There was robust and frequent debate*** amongst and between senior public servants, Politicians, political advisers and senior public servants disagreed on many things, but shared the common goal of building a strong country, so there was openness to debate, and debate was frequent, robust and constructive. Also, because politicians and bureaucrats worked closely together, Ministers and departmental heads always presented a consensus view publicly, so there was no confusion in the community.

***There was strong, centralised control of monetary and fiscal policy.*** Sector budgets were closely coordinated, and institutional, budgeting and public administrative systems all functioned well.

***Senior public servants were generally better educated than politicians.*** This meant politicians, most of whom were young, relied on the advice of public servants, and did not interfere in decision-making relating to public sector management. The onus on public servants to brief their ministers well was strong.

***“Teamwork was the name of the game”*** amongst senior public servants, within and across departments, and through to provincial administrations. This strengthened the ability of the public service to process policies through to implementation. It also established institutional knowledge amongst senior managers, not only of their own organisation but of the entire system of government administration through to the community level. The benefits of consultation for cohesive policy were visible.

***The public service was independent and professional.*** Public servants had job security and personnel were unaffected by politics. ***There were proper checks and balances*** in the system, and they were adhered to. In relation to performance management, for instance, the challenge of trying to be better than or equal to work colleagues meant people worked hard and strove to improve. Promotions were merit-based. On the flip side, penalties such as demotion, pay cuts, or dismissal were applied when staff did not meet expectations. ***The Public Services Commission (PSC) was powerful*** (the commissioners were known as “the three gods”), independent of politics, and fundamental to the charter of the public service.

***Public servants were well trained, dedicated and closely in touch with basic service needs in provinces.*** Although transport facilities were far more limited than today, public servants got out of Port Moresby far more frequently, and worked closely with counterparts in provincial and local level government departments. At a central level too, departments worked much more closely with each other.<sup>1</sup> Public servants had a strong sense of community service obligation which generally promoted community participation in development activities in local communities (as opposed to the handout mentality that is prevalent these days).

***There was a dynamic team of young and committed expatriates,*** who were not in PNG for financial reasons, but for the challenge of helping an emerging nation.

Sir John Crawford at the time (1977) commented that PNG was running the country so well on all fronts that he could see nowhere it could go except down.

## CHANGING DYNAMICS

Even during the early post-independence period, interviewees point to certain dynamics which, over time, contributed to increasing politicisation and gradual weakening of both the management and operations of the public sector in PNG. From the mid-1980s, the dynamics in favour of poor administration took much stronger hold.

***There was a move away from traditional bureaucratic procedures.*** The move, post-independence, to “de-neutralise” public servants was an attempt to hasten change, as required by the independent constitutional review. The ethos and modus operandi of

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<sup>1</sup> One example given was the practice during the late 1970s of joint teams (Department of Finance, National Planning Office and Department of Provincial Affairs) visiting every province to conduct training programs in budgetary planning and financial management. This training was followed up with quarterly visits, again by joint teams, to work through any problems with provincial staff. Over time, those that were competent were given autonomy, or “full financial responsibility”. Others continued to receive quarterly on-the-job training and support from national level teams.

the Australian model for public administration were thought to be too heavily rules and procedures driven and not commensurate with PNG's needs for public administration at the time.

*A cadre of political advisers was put in place* to provide alternative advice to that being given by the “old guard” of Australian-trained public servants. At the time, there were many highly competent people around, and this was seen as a desirable move - both to strengthen the competency of political leaders and to promote contestability. But over time it led to “all sorts of pseudo advisers coming out of the woodwork to influence Ministers” – one interviewee referred to these as “UFOs”.

*The lines between politics and administration began to blur.* There was an increasing feeling amongst politicians that the bureaucracy was too powerful and independent, and not astute to political needs. Although most politicians had little or no experience in public policy or organisation management, by the mid-1980s they were generally much better educated, and a belief grew that they “knew it all” and did not need to rely on the advice of public servants. Public resources increasingly became controlled by politics rather than public policy, and politicians began involving themselves in administration, project management, and senior appointments.

Within the public service itself, *professionalism and ethics were eroded* over time. Young and highly qualified graduates also felt they “knew it all”, wanting to be at the top without learning about the procedures and systems. The localisation program allowed this; it was easy to be promoted without sufficient skill levels during the 1980s. Later in senior management positions these people were ill-equipped to guide professional practices. Today, many public servants have had no exposure at all to “the old work ethic”, and believe current flawed practices - be they corrupt, inefficient, or unprofessional - to be the norm. Some are playing politics for personal gain; some for survival; and others because they know no different.

“Why do people criss-cross? *Self interest* drives much of it.” When combined with the continuing long-standing pressures of PNG's wantok system, the trends toward cronyism and political interference in public administration meant newer breeds of politician or public servant were quickly absorbed into a “Me first, country second” approach to their roles, a trend which has yet to be arrested.

Expatriate personnel were in contracted, line positions, subject to normal lines of command, discipline, and public service ethics. *The shift to off-line, advisory support* during the 1980s, whilst a well-intentioned part of the localisation process, “was a step backwards” in the opinion of interviewees. Apart from being much more expensive, it has created a feeling of condescension between ‘advisers’ and their ‘counterparts’; reduced sustainability prospects by separating the work done by advisers from the ‘normal’ work of departments; created a dependency by Departmental Heads on using advisers to fix problems rather than training nationals to learn the job by doing it; destroyed the collegiate sense that previously existed (“we used to work and socialise together”); and eroded any sense of pride in achievements – counterparts do not have any sense of ownership of results, and advisers today “are not long term stayers”.

## SOME PIVOTAL DECISIONS

There were also certain key policy decisions, taken in good faith at the time, which eroded the checks and balances in PNG's public administration system and opened the door to corruption. Interestingly, all those interviewed point to the same decisions and events as having been pivotal.

***Control of sectoral budgets.*** By the early 1980s, certain line agencies (eg: education) were very well managed and obviously competent to control their own budgets. A sense of resentment over the tight central control and coordination of financial matters was developing in these agencies, a view with which the central controllers - the "Gang of Four"<sup>2</sup> - had some sympathy. Plans were underway to give a greater degree of control to those agencies able to manage their sectoral budgets, and "sector funds" were being trialled. At this time, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Transport argued that the transport sector budget was his to control. He axed the National Public Expenditure Plan, and took over decision making on allocations within the infrastructure budget. Agriculture then followed. This was the first real move to political control of public sector management, and to using public funds as slush funds. It was also the first step towards bad public administration.

***Control of senior public service positions.*** By the mid-late 1980s, it became fashionable to introduce private sector culture into public services. In PNG, this trend coincided with the growing desire of politicians to control public resources. The powers of the PSC were reduced dramatically, senior public service positions became contract rather than permanent appointments, and departmental head appointments were made by Cabinet, rather than the PSC. In theory, the intention was to strengthen the role of departmental heads. In practice, the result has been that Secretaries (and often other senior personnel) change whenever a new Minister is appointed. This has seriously undermined the professionalism of the public service, causing departmental heads to focus only on the short-term, and to play political games in their own attempts at survival. It has also enabled politicians to get too close to operational areas within the public service.

***Decentralisation – the 1995 Organic Law.*** Interviewees consider PNG's three-tier system of government is not functioning as intended. Although intended to clarify the system, the 1995 revisions to the Organic Law added to the problems.<sup>3</sup> PNG is now "over-governed", and the system itself is hampering effective service delivery. All layers - of government, public sector institutions, and decision-making - are disaggregated and unfocused. Provincial governments have been unable to meet the expectations of them, and local governments have not been empowered. The end result is that significant funds are tied up in administration rather than development, services are not being delivered, and the gap between government and people is

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<sup>2</sup> Sir Mekere Morauta (Treasury/Finance), Sir Rabbie Namaliu (Foreign Affairs), Sir Anthony Siaguru (Public Services Commission), and Mr Charles Lepani (Planning).

<sup>3</sup> As an example, over 100 pieces of enabling legislation were needed to implement the 1995 Organic Law, which were not in place when the Law came into effect. These were still being worked through at the time of writing. In the meantime, confusion over the roles of agencies at different levels of government means service delivery is declining rather than improving. For example, the national government pays for the staff of provincial radio stations, but allocates nothing for goods and services funding on the assumption that provincial governments will fund these.

widening, not closing. Further, priority setting differs at national and provincial levels, so priorities cannot be reflected in a unitary way.

Adding to these complexities, resource needs calculated for provincial and local level governments in 1998 were never honoured by the national government. According to interviewees, the major problem was that the funding formula under the Organic Law reflected political expediency rather than economic reality. Grants were calculated on the basis on population and land mass; provinces had not been paid the full grants since 1995 when the Organic law was passed.

Demand for government services increased and the public service machinery could not effectively deliver. Politicians, being concerned with survival, had to devise other delivery systems by taking greater control of the funding allocation to provinces. Thereafter, development grants were added to the funds of members of parliament, who now determine what funding goes where, and this may or may not match district priorities. In any case, interviewees argue that PNG's systems cannot support this many layers and institutions. PNG is now "over-democratised" and its problems have become multi-faceted.

*The pace of localisation* removed the foundation that had underpinned effective public administration in PNG. Significant expertise was lost from critical positions and, over time, as less experienced people took over key positions, productivity declined, inefficiencies took root, and the demand for service delivery forced the public service to grow in size - more people were needed to do the same jobs that had previously been done by a few. Nobody looked at the affordability of rapid recruitment at the time. Five to ten years later, it became clear that the rate of growth of the public service had outstripped PNG's economic capacity.

*Embracing globalisation* added to the pressures confronting PNG at about this time. PNG had to adhere to international commitments on various global issues such as the environment, trade, commerce, and economic performance, which not only placed additional pressure on the Government and the public service to meet those obligations, but at times also diverted attention from core domestic problems.

## **EARLY OPPORTUNITIES TO ARREST THE DECLINE?**

One interviewee suggested it is wrong for critics to be too severe in their indictment of PNG's performance. At the time (through the 1980s), nobody said "hold on, we are heading in the wrong direction". Whilst there had been some clear examples of deliberate mismanagement or poor decision making, he felt much of the country's current situation could be attributed to missed opportunities, unforeseen disasters, and voluminous resource flows.

The *Leadership Code II* was an attempt to focus political leaders on sound management of the country. Prior to this, politicians had been required to declare any personal business interests; the new code required them to sell off those interests. It was disagreement over this new Code that led to the first major break in the Somare/Chan coalition in the early 1980s.

The degree of *instability in tenure* since the early 1990s (for both politicians and senior public servants) has made finding solutions to PNG's problems more difficult, even where they were recognised early. Although leaders under the Leadership Code II must forfeit any business interests, the likelihood that they will last more than 18 months (if elected at all given the proliferation of parties) makes many potential leaders reluctant to leave the private sector. Likewise, the shift to politically-controlled, contract appointment of departmental heads from the late 1980s has seriously limited the capacity to arrest deterioration of public administration. Since then, Secretaries have reportedly served on average only 12-18 months before losing their positions. Since they must be the champions of change within the public service, and cultural/attitudinal change takes time, even the best of them have been able to achieve little. According to one interviewee, this degree of instability now means PNG will never attract good public servants back from the private sector, even though such mobility may be desirable.

## **THE ROLE OF DONORS**

According to interviewees, the demise of public administration in PNG was largely self-inflicted. On the justifiable assumption that the sovereign government did concern itself with development, donors supported government priorities, whether rightly or wrongly. In PNG however, one can see with hindsight that, whilst government concerned itself with development in social sectors to some extent, little attention was paid to managing economic growth. At the time Australian budget support ceased, despite the fact that it was phased out over several years, PNG was not adequately prepared to be able to finance the gap, and lost the flexibility to fund priority programs. Budget support had allowed PNG to adopt a sense of complacency about the affordability of public sector salaries and programs and, by the time it ceased, the problem was already too large.

PNG did not reprioritise development expenditures, continuing to spend as it always had, and introducing "band-aid solutions" whenever problems emerged. Strategic development planning was never considered as a critical vehicle to guide long-term development and, as a consequence, the main focus was on annual planning, because this provided the means for political expediency. Then, from 1998, in response to World Bank reluctance to approve a second structural adjustment loan to finance PNG's budget shortfall unless certain conflicts of interest were first addressed, PNG instead sought to find commercial loans and tried to launch an international bond float. "Forced" to borrow from the Central Bank, PNG further increased its excessive debt burden.

## **PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN PNG TODAY**

As one interviewee put it, the failure to arrest deterioration of public administration has been "a matter of momentum". The public service today is characterised by "muted frustration". Its *independence and professionalism have been eroded*. Politics has usurped and devalued the fundamental role of public administrators - providing good technical advice to Ministers. The blurring of roles between politics and bureaucracy has derailed national and sectoral policies, led to gross inefficiencies, and left a demoralised and insecure public service. People do not see it being in their



interest to change the nature of PNG politics, and the bureaucracy feels powerless. As one interviewee put it, “being a departmental head in this country is a nightmare”.

Within departments, *lines of authority and discipline have collapsed*, due to frequent changes in leadership, lack of direction on priorities, and an increasing lack of accountability and transparency in the public administration system. As these systems have broken down, service delivery has been adversely affected, and qualities such as honesty, trust, dedication, and the spirit of working together industriously have disappeared. The ethics of public service are no longer upheld. Another consequence has been a breaking down of nationalistic commitment within the public service. Personnel tend to be consider their province first, and region second.

## **WHERE TO NOW?**

Although “*the constitution needs a major overhaul*” to address both political and policy dilemmas, most interviewees believe the failure to address these seriously to date is to some extent a resource problem rather than a lack of will. In their view, government interventions/initiatives introduced by the 2002 Somare Government and preceding Morauta Government are starting to have impact, but it is too early to see visible results as yet. The emphasis on fire-fighting means there are pockets of impact, but there is still no integrated focus to the reform efforts. The key for PNG lies in assuring the integrity of key institutions, maintaining consistency, and working to approved plans. Most of the legislation, policies and systems already in place are good. But they are only as good as the people who work the systems. PNG’s problems are more to do with implementation than with policy. At the same time, before more effective approaches can be put in place and implemented, decision-makers need to reach consensus on what they want to achieve. In essence, the decision to be made is whether they want what is best for the country in the long term or what is best for individuals in the short term. Following are the issues that interviewees feel are of highest priority for PNG looking forward.

*Reform PNG’s political system* to reduce the constant political changes. “PNG is a funny place and will always have coalition governments”. Nevertheless, some greater degree of stability could be achieved, for instance by reducing the frequency of allowable no-confidence motions in parliament and by supporting political parties to maintain some degree of coherence.

*Re-establish clear and independent roles of politics and the public service.* To a large extent, this simply involves abiding by existing legal and constitutional requirements. But inappropriate practices are now so deeply ingrained that the issue is far from simple. First and foremost, strong direction is needed from Executive Government that the role of politicians is as legislated. Thereafter, administrative bodies must enforce rules, procedures and discipline, requiring compliance and not allowing or tolerating shortcuts. Whilst at first glance this may sound somewhat rigid, the increased role clarity and administrative efficiency would be expected to help instil a more positive work ethic throughout the public administration system in PNG. For instance, if people were assured of being paid, they may see some point to turning up at work. If they knew promotions were truly merit-based, they may have an incentive to perform. There is no short-term solution, because much depends on changing peoples’ attitudes and, in PNG now, the “smorgasbord of cultural, work, and

political values” makes it difficult to get back to a clear focus on service delivery. ***The solution lies in strong leadership.*** Leaders must not only give clear directions, but must drive the process to ensure action follows – and they must resource the administration appropriately to ensure it can.

In the first instance, PNG needs to “go back to the old PSC model”. ***Management of the entire public service should be housed with the PSC,*** including appointments, transfers, dismissals, selection and performance criteria, and discipline. Departmental heads should revert to being permanent appointments, ideally with no selections referred to Cabinet for approval. If this is unrealistic, then providing a transparent shortlist of three candidates to Cabinet may be adequate. Recent changes aimed at empowering the PSC are a good step, but further reform is needed before true independence can be re-established. For instance, the PSC and DPM should be combined as one, independent constitutional office, as in the past, so that all personnel management matters can be protected from political interference. Also, the tendency for political suspension of departmental heads needs to be addressed.

As part of its reform program, the government is undertaking a major public service reform program with the intention of ***refocusing the government on its core functions and re-establishing accountable, transparent governance systems and processes.*** The program is still fragile and, while this government has put its weight behind it, the test will be to back it with real sustained support. Donors can play an effective supporting role in re-establishing systems and processes.

***Put communities first.*** Both government and donors need to pay more attention to ensuring their programs actually mesh with local community priorities and capacity. These will vary from one community to the next, and a one-size-fits-all approach leads to “big white elephants” with unforeseen ongoing costs within communities. Funding should only be provided for priorities identified in local community development plans. Programs must be tailored to local capacity, and accountability requirements must appreciate local conditions. A requirement for three quotes from local contractors for a small community project on an isolated island, for example, “is sheer madness”.

***Seriously address decentralisation (aspirations and current flaws) in the context of affordability and responsible public expenditure management.*** As one interviewee pointed out, lack of resources is not the issue. PNG has enough money; it is simply not spending in the right areas. The policy may be about decentralisation, but the reality is that more and more is centralised. “Waigani has ballooned.” Similarly, the mismatch between district priorities and the priorities of the members of parliament who control development funding needs to be addressed. ***The solution depends on political reform as much as on financial and administrative reforms.*** Between 1975 and 1995, various working groups looked at the technical and administrative issues associated with decentralisation; reports were debated; and a bipartisan committee of the National Parliament was formed. Yet today, with funding tight, PNG again finds itself at a crossroad - it cannot resource provincial and local governments properly.

***Strengthen PNG’s accountability institutions*** (Attorney General, Auditor General, Ombudsman, Judiciary, etc) so that they can and do “investigate and charge leaders”.

These institutions are well respected in the community, having by and large withstood political pressures over the years, but they need to be supported.

***Address and resolve fiscal problems.*** According to one interviewee, this first requires examining the actual performance of political leaders, the administration, and other agencies of the State (where and why performance has deteriorated, and strategies for improving it), at all levels of government. This will determine how resources are being spent, identify the real cost of services, and indicate areas that could be cut. In other words, ***the question of affordability should be considered after performance has been addressed.***

***Strengthen central agencies and the Central Agencies Coordinating Committee (CACC).*** “National coordinating agencies have become defunct.” Some are highly politicised now; others simply won’t deal with each other, and do not feel compelled to. Political control of appointment and dismissal of senior public servants has devalued incentives related to effective public administration, instead rewarding individual political profile and competition amongst central agencies for political favour. “If you coordinate, your own effect is blunted; you can’t score points with politicians as easily or as quickly. Making the choice to share power is a part of the ethics of good management and leadership”. The CACC, established during Morauta’s term, was intended as a means of reactivating the old *Budget Priorities Committee*<sup>4</sup>, which had assured the integrity and coordination of departmental proposals. Most interviewees remain optimistic about the CACC’s potential to coordinate (or force) a shift back to responsible public administration, but they all agree that this initiative is only half working at this point in time. The CACC at present must make a separate submission to Cabinet on departmental proposals, and it has too many sector interests represented, which influence and skew budget decisions. It is also under-resourced, with little time to “ponder big issues”. Other central agencies, such as Treasury/Finance, DPM, PSC and the Auditor General’s Office also need to be resourced adequately to allow them to monitor and strengthen public sector performance agreements, strategic plans, financial management, budget planning, and so forth. Weak coordinating agencies leave line agencies exposed to direct political interference.

***Establish a clear working relationship with donors.*** Interviewees feel strongly that donors continue to have an important role to play in PNG’s development, but that the ball is in PNG’s court to give donors a clear mandate on *where* they can help. As they see it, “donors are not there to solve our problems. They are there to help *us* solve our problems. If we don’t have our house in order, donors become hesitant to support us.” There is “a culture of denial” amongst some in PNG politics. They do not believe there is a problem and, in any case, do not want foreigners involved at all. All those interviewed, however, feel it is critical for PNG to “take advice from anyone, treat donors as resources, and stop denying ourselves access to advice.” They argue PNG

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<sup>4</sup> The Budget Priorities Committee was chaired by the Treasury Secretary, who sat in Cabinet during deliberations. The Committee included Secretaries of the PSC, Foreign Affairs and Planning and, on occasion, involved the Attorney General. No department could put any proposal to Cabinet without going through this Committee. This ensured proposals were not approved without first obtaining support from Treasury/Finance (that funds would be available) and the PSC (that personnel and other necessary resources would be available). When this committee was dissolved, both Planning and DPM suffered, losing their link with the budget.

does not have the capacity or the resources to fix the system themselves, and must accept help.

***Reinstate a structured and targeted public service training program.*** Until the mid-1980s, a coherent program of training for public servants was provided by the Administrative College (ADCOL), later the Institute of Public Affairs (IPA). This coherence was lost over time, initially when IPA sought to reinvent itself as an academic institution and was opened up to offer training to the private as well as public sector (“its relevance fizzled”), and then when a user pays system was introduced<sup>5</sup> and departments were given the freedom to source training from anywhere. Today, there is no institutionalised or enforced system for induction courses, middle management or senior executive training programs, or other administrative skills training requirements which must be completed prior to obtaining promotions. As a result, public servants are no longer fitted into an organisational culture from the outset, they have little or no exposure to public service ethics, and they learn in an ad hoc way as they go.

Efforts to revitalise the public service through training in the past have focused on the wrong things, such as scholarships and IPA infrastructure. Future support must ***target skills development at a working level***, through on-the-job training and mentoring rather than expensive formal courses. The strategy of sending people to complete Masters degrees, for example, needs rethinking. There are many Masters degree-qualified public servants today, yet productivity, efficiency and management ability continue to decline. Even the best-qualified people cannot effect change in a system so broken. The focus now needs to be on developing strong leadership and management skills so that the system as a whole can be improved.

## THE FUTURE FOCUS OF AID

***Restructure donor support to focus on a few clear priorities.*** Australia in particular is at risk of trying to do too much, thus diluting the results it achieves.<sup>6</sup> When results are not tangible, claims of ‘boomerang aid’ can surface. According to interviewees, donors need to focus on building goodwill by delivering results. They encourage donor partners to maintain their focus on helping PNG improve ***governance***, in particular rehabilitation of the public service, as this is fundamental to effective delivery of basic services. Interviewees argue that ***structural adjustment*** is necessary, but will only succeed if PNG itself controls the process, resources it, and manages any donor support. The volume of donor funding available to PNG in the past has meant people did not need to look within for solutions. Thus they have never had any imperative to prioritise effectively.

Donor assistance also needs to be restructured to ***focus on really rebuilding the capacity of the public service***. At present, “There are pockets of brilliance but the engine is not humming.” Key precursors for achieving impact from capacity building support need to be reinstituted, notably:

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<sup>5</sup> As departmental resources have become more constrained over the years, training budgets have been cut. As a result, many departments stopped using IPA to conduct training.

<sup>6</sup> One example given was the fact that school inspectors are not visiting schools, because they are too busy “looking at high tech things like the Virtual Colombo Plan”. The advice to donors is – “focus on core issues and don’t divert”.

- Clear definition of the *roles* of management; and
- Ensuring the whole public administration *system* is integrated.

Another commonly held view amongst interviewees is that donor programs should not be put in place on top of existing government programs. Initiatives such as the *Enhanced Cooperation Program* (ECP) for example, need to ***integrate advisers*** within existing systems, both psychologically and in terms of their work programs. Other consultant support too, needs rethinking. In most cases, the ***areas of focus are correct, but implementation approaches are ineffective***. More often than not, consultants leave nothing behind, either because they have been unable to encourage local commitment to following through, or because there is no consistency in the models, plans and approaches introduced. All interviewees describe advisers from earlier years being much more closely integrated and collegiate in their approach.

## **VIEWS ON PNG'S OUTLOOK**

All those interviewed remain positive about PNG's prospects for effective public administration over the long term. They believe that, if PNG starts now and really focuses on the key issues, it can achieve this over one generation. "Things are happening now that can set the foundation, but it needs constant shoulders to the wheel." In spite of its problems, they identify a number of strengths that they believe give PNG a firm foundation on which to build:

- Strength of constitutional offices;
- Flexibility of governments of the day to amend the constitution when necessary;
- Rural-based nature of the population – which assures a basic standard of living (access to basic housing, food and other necessities);
- Resource base for economic growth;
- Traditional land system – which provides people with a certain level of security even if all else fails; and
- A new, increasing demand from communities for performance from government.

Interviewees all recognise that the community's tolerance of government's problems (to date) has been because it can sustain itself; but impatience with the failure of service delivery is growing.

As they see it, attitude is the crux of the issue. PNG needs to develop confidence and a positive attitude to building a nation. It must learn to appreciate its own huge potential, embrace its ability to harness that potential, build a sense of community, and recognise the need to do things for itself. People need to think as Papua New Guineans first and foremost, respecting all others regardless of tribal group.

**"OUR COUNTRY NEEDS GOOD ROLE MODELS, ESPOUSING THE RIGHT PRINCIPLES OF SERVICE AND COMMUNITY CARE. THEY MUST BE PEOPLE OF INTEGRITY AND COURAGE ENOUGH TO STAND UP FOR WHAT THEY BELIEVE TO BE RIGHT WHEN CONFRONTED WITH A SEA OF SILENCE AND QUIET CONSENT."**

**- SIR ANTHONY SIAGURU, 1 APRIL 2004**